

Remarks

Summary

Amended independent Claims 1, 15, and 32 recite at least one feature not disclosed or suggested by the patent to Azuma, et al. Therefore, is the outstanding rejection of these claims over this patent still proper?

Status of the claims

Claims 1, 4, 9, 10, 12-15, 18, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 32, 34, 40, 41, and 43-45 have been amended. Claims 1-36 and 39-51 are pending. Claims 1, 9, 15, 23, 32, and 40 are independent.

Requested action

Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw the outstanding rejections in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Applicants also respectfully request that this Amendment be entered. This Amendment could not have been presented earlier as it was earnestly believed that the claims on file would be found allowable. Given the Examiner's familiarity with the application, Applicants believe that a full understanding and consideration of this Amendment would not require undue time or effort by the Examiner. Moreover, for the reasons discussed below, Applicants submit that this Amendment places the application in condition for allowance. At the very least, it is believed to place the application in better form for appeal. Accordingly, entry of this Amendment is believed to be appropriate and such entry is respectfully requested.

Allowable subject matter

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the allowance of Claims 9-14, 23-28, 40-45, 49/9, 50/23, and 51/40.

Substantive rejections

Claims 1-3, 5-8, 15-17, 19-22, 30-33, 35, 36, 39, 46-48, 49/1, 50/15, and 51/32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,035,159 (Azuma, et al.). Claims 4, 18, and 34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the patent to Azuma, et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,768,656 (Nagasue, et al.). Claim 29 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the patent to Azuma, et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,016,413 (Yokoyama, et al.).

Response to substantive rejections

In response, while not conceding the propriety of the rejections, independent Claims 1, 15, and 32 have been amended. Applicants submit that as amended, these claims are allowable for the following reasons.

Independent Claim 1 relates to a drive transmission apparatus for transmitting a driving force to a member to be driven, comprising a first coupling portion and a second coupling portion having a hole portion which has a cross-sectional configuration larger than the first coupling portion. The hole portion is engageable with the first coupling portion. Claim 1 also recites that the apparatus comprises a center shaft provided on one of the first coupling portion

and the second coupling portion, the center shaft penetrating the other one of the first coupling portion and the second coupling portion.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite that the apparatus relates to a drive transmission apparatus for transmitting a driving force to a member to be driven having a flange member fixed to the member to be driven. Claim 1 has also been amended to recite that one of the first coupling portion and the second coupling portion receives the driving force and is integral with the flange member.

Independent Claim 15 relates to an image forming apparatus comprising a photosensitive member, charging means for charging the photosensitive member, image forming means for forming an electrostatic image on the photosensitive member charged by the charging means, developing means for developing the electrostatic image, transferring means for transferring the image developed by the developing means onto a recording material, a driving source, a driver positioned and configured to transmit a driving force from the driving source to the photosensitive member, a first coupling portion, and a second coupling portion having a hole portion which has a cross-sectional configuration larger than the first coupling portion. The hole portion is engageable with the first coupling portion. Claim 15 further recites that the apparatus comprises a center shaft provided on one of the first coupling portion and the second coupling portion, the center shaft penetrating the other one of the first coupling portion and the second coupling portion.

Claim 15 has been amended to recite a flange member fixed to the photosensitive member. Claim 15 has also been amended to recite that one of the first coupling portion and the second coupling portion receives the driving force and is integral with the flange member. In

addition, Claim 15 recites that the other one of the first coupling portion and the second coupling portion is provided on the driver.

Independent Claim 32 relates to a process unit which is detachably mountable to a main assembly of an image forming apparatus having a driving portion. The process unit includes process means actable on a photosensitive member.

Claim 32 has been amended to recite that the process unit comprises a flange member fixed to the photosensitive member and a coupling portion which is integral with the flange member and engageable with the driving portion of the main assembly of the apparatus.

Claim 32 also recites that the unit comprises a hole portion engaged with a center shaft penetrating an engaging portion between the coupling portion and the driving portion.

By these arrangements, the deviation of the rotational center can be avoided even when an external force other than the driving force is received by the member to be driven or the photosensitive member.

In contrast, the patent to Azuma, et al. is not understood to disclose or suggest a drive transmission apparatus in which one of the first coupling portion and the second coupling portion receives the driving force and is integral with a flange member fixed to a member to be driven, as recited by Claim 1, an image forming apparatus in which one of the first coupling portion and the second coupling portion receives the driving force and is integral with a flange member of the image forming apparatus fixed to a photosensitive member, as recited by amended Claim 15, or a process unit comprising a flange member fixed to a photosensitive member and a coupling portion which is integral with the flange member and engageable with the driving portion of a main assembly of an image forming apparatus, as recited by amended Claim 32. Rather, the

elements the Examiner identifies in the Azuma, et al. patent as the first and second coupling portions—projection 20 and drum drive gear 22—do not appear to be integral with drum flange 37.

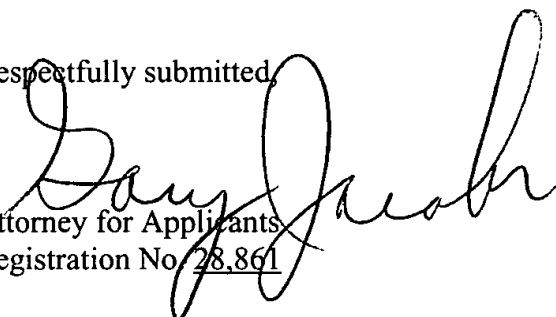
For these reasons, amended independent Claims 1, 15, and 32 are allowable over this patent.

The dependent claims are allowable for the reasons given for the allowance of the independent claims and because they recite features that are patentable in their own right. Individual consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully solicited.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, the claims are now in allowable form and entry of this Amendment is considered proper. Therefore, early passage to issue is respectfully solicited.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,


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